

What is claimed is:

1. A cross-site search method used in a server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from said information retrieval sites, said method comprising:

recording a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of information retrieval sites into storage, said conversion function converting a description of a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of an information retrieval site, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of an information retrieval site that requires authentication as a condition to respond search results;

reading a script definition corresponding to the information retrieval site designated by the user terminal from said storage;

receiving certification from the information retrieval site by executing the authentication function when the script definition for the information retrieval site includes the authentication function;

converting said search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the information retrieval site by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the designated information retrieval site;

receiving search results from the information retrieval site that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting the received search results to the user terminal.

2. The cross-site search method according to claim 1, further comprising:

recording predetermined sets of authentication information and ID information into said storage for each information retrieval site when the information retrieval site requires authentication and restricts the access number by assigning predetermined sets of authentication information to a source of an information retrieval request, said authentication information being assigned to said server by said information retrieval site, and said ID information identifying whether said authentication information is used or not;

identifying unassigned authentication information based on the ID information read from said storage corresponding to said information retrieval site; and

transmitting the identified authentication information to said information retrieval site to receive the certification from said information retrieval site.

3. The cross-site search method according to claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting authentication information assigned by an information retrieval site to said information retrieval site according to an authentication function to receive certification from said information retrieval site when the script definition for said information retrieval site includes said authentication function.

4. The cross-site search method according to claim 1, wherein the communication between said server and said user terminal, and the communication between said server and said information retrieval sites use TCP/IP and HTTP, respectively.

5. A cross-site search program used in a server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval

according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from the information retrieval sites, said program causing said server to execute the procedures of:

recording a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of information retrieval sites into storage, said conversion function converting a description of a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of an information retrieval site, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of an information retrieval site that requires authentication as a condition to respond search results;

reading a script definition corresponding to the information retrieval site designated by the user terminal from said storage;

receiving certification from the information retrieval site by executing the authentication function when the script definition for the information retrieval site includes the authentication function;

converting said search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the information retrieval site by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the designated information retrieval site;

receiving search results from the information retrieval site that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting the received search results to said user terminal.

6. The cross-site search program according to claim 5, wherein said program is a CGI program.

7. A cross-site search program running on a computer connected to a user terminal and a number of information retrieval sites through a network, said program causing said computer to execute the procedures of:

accepting designation of any one of said information retrieval sites with a search condition by said user terminal;

identifying a script definition corresponding to the designated information retrieval site among a number of script definitions, said script definition defining a conversion function that converts a description of a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description

rule of an information retrieval site;

receiving certification from the information retrieval site by executing an authentication function when the script definition for said information retrieval site includes said authentication function;

converting the search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the information retrieval site by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the designated information retrieval site;

receiving search results from the information retrieval site that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting the received search results to said user terminal.

8. A server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from the information retrieval sites, said server comprising:

receiving means that receive said search condition

from said user terminal;

recording means that record a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function for each of information retrieval sites into storage, the conversion function converting a description of a search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of an information retrieval site, and the authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of an information retrieval site that requires authentication as a condition to respond search results;

reading means that read a script definition corresponding to the information retrieval site designated by the user terminal from said storage;

receiving means that receive certification from the information retrieval site by executing the authentication function when the script definition for the information retrieval site includes the authentication function;

converting means that convert the search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the information retrieval site by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting means that transmit a search request according to the converted search condition to the

designated information retrieval site;

receiving means that receive search results from the information retrieval site that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting means that transmit the received search results to the user terminal.